

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 68

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE GOVERNOR, THE SECRETARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THE STATE ENGINEER AND THE SECRETARY OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION, TO STUDY THE MOST EFFECTIVE OPTIONS FOR NEW MEXICO TO CONSERVE AND DEVELOP GROUND WATER IN THE SALT BASIN AND OTHER GROUND WATER BASINS OF NEW MEXICO FOR THE BENEFIT AND USE BY NEW MEXICO COMMUNITIES.

WHEREAS, water is essential for survival and for sustaining the state's economies; and

WHEREAS, ground water resources provide a bank to sustain communities during droughts when surface water becomes unreliable; and

WHEREAS, speculators are buying farm and ranch land in Texas, New Mexico and other western states for the land's

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1 ground water rights to sell to growing cities; and

2 WHEREAS, this kind of speculation not only threatens  
3 existing farm and ranch economies but challenges those cities  
4 and urban communities to make wise decisions about the use of  
5 limited water supplies, to practice conservation and to spend  
6 public money for water supplies wisely and efficiently; and

7 WHEREAS, the salt basin of New Mexico and Dell valley of  
8 Texas exemplify the west's harsh dilemmas over ground water  
9 resources, with its one-hundred-square-mile ground water lake  
10 generating legal feuds, according to the *Wall Street Journal*,  
11 among farmers, ranchers and water speculators such as Phil  
12 Anschutz; and

13 WHEREAS, other speculators, such as T. Boone Pickens, have  
14 bought out ranchers and farmers in the Texas panhandle, where  
15 they plan to pump ground water out from under New Mexico  
16 farmers, ranchers and communities; and

17 WHEREAS, New Mexicans also feud over water a little bit,  
18 as well as worry about legal assaults by the state of Texas  
19 over river compacts; and

20 WHEREAS, some resident's thoughts about where and how to  
21 use available water are constrained by old habits and old  
22 assumptions;

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
24 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the interstate stream commission be  
25 requested to proactively analyze and assess new options

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1 available to New Mexico to conserve and develop salt basin  
2 ground water for the benefit and use by New Mexico communities  
3 and to develop a more strategic policy for protecting New  
4 Mexico's ground water resources along the borders with Texas  
5 and other states; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor, the secretary of  
7 economic development, the state engineer and the secretary of  
8 finance and administration cooperate and assist the interstate  
9 stream commission in development of a more strategic vision for  
10 New Mexico's water resources, especially the salt basin and the  
11 Ogallala aquifer, rather than habitually following typical  
12 reactionary tactics when crises occur; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the interstate stream  
14 commission report its findings and recommendations for  
15 legislation to the legislature by December 1, 2005; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
17 transmitted to the interstate stream commission, the governor,  
18 the secretary of economic development, the state engineer and  
19 the secretary of finance and administration.

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